

HON. ROBERT T. MATSUI
Member of Congress
Fifth District
Sacramento, California

Robert T. Matsui first campaigned in 1978 for the congressional seat serving Sacramento, California, persuading voters that he would bring to office “a new form of statesmanship.” Having entered the race as an underdog candidate, then-vice mayor Matsui was helped to victory by a team of hundreds of committed volunteers. Now a twenty-five year veteran of the House of Representatives, Matsui continues to fulfill his promise. He frequently receives accolades for bringing extraordinary levels of dedication, competence, innovation, and integrity to his public service.

As a senior member of the Committee on Ways and Means, Representative Matsui has been intricately and substantially involved with the Committee’s portfolio of complex public policy issues including tax, international trade, social security, health care, and welfare reform. He currently serves as ranking minority member of the Social Security Subcommittee, and has previously held posts as ranking minority member of the Oversight Subcommittee, acting chair of the Trade Subcommittee, and acting chair of the Human Resources Subcommittee. Matsui has played crucial roles in developing and passing legislation that has become the foundation for some of the Ways and Means Committee’s most successful programs over the past two decades.

Representative Matsui is currently engaged as a Democratic leader in the effort to save Social Security. He is one of the nation’s most ardent advocates for a social insurance program without which more than half of Americans over age 65 would fall below the poverty line. Matsui has condemned proposals to carve private accounts from the existing system, publicly exposing the fact that all such proposals would cut benefits, raise the retirement age, or reduce retirees’ standard of living while further exacerbating Social Security’s financing challenges. In the 108th Congress, Matsui is the only current Social Security Subcommittee member who also served on the Subcommittee in 1983, the last time the program faced major changes. He is determined to revise Social Security incrementally to ensure its long-term solvency without compromising its fundamental purpose: to reduce or eliminate poverty among America’s elderly, persons with disabilities, and surviving dependents who have lost a wage-earning family member. Matsui believes that all of these groups are entitled to the certainty and stability of a guaranteed income that allows them to live with dignity.

For his long-standing commitment to free and open international trade, Representative Matsui has also gained a reputation as an effective, strategic leader in this crucial policy area. While Matsui was acting chairman of the Trade Subcommittee in 1993, President Clinton turned to him to lead one of the most heated congressional battles of the decade: the fight to pass the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Working in concert with Republicans and Democrats, Matsui was a driver in passing this keystone of modern American trade policy. Matsui also spearheaded the 1994 efforts to secure Congressional approval of the Uruguay Round Agreements, which led to the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO). In 2000, the Clinton Administration enlisted him to fight another uphill battle, this time for approval of Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) with China. Again, by working with both Republicans and Democrats, Matsui played a key

role in passing the legislation. His expert voice has been crucial in efforts to secure Fast-Track trade negotiating authority over the last decade, although he has supported and opposed various proposals based on their detailed merits and weaknesses. Throughout these trade debates, Matsui has constantly advocated environmental protections and the provision of fair compensation and trade adjustment to American workers whose jobs are negatively impacted by the lowering of barriers to trade.

Representative Matsui has also been an ardent advocate on issues involving the well being of American children. The first two bills he ever introduced in Congress sought to strengthen enforcement of child support payments. His commitment to helping families achieve independence led him in 1991 to draft legislation that became the backbone for child welfare reform, proposing to expand the social services available to at-risk children and families in the child welfare, mental health, and juvenile justice systems. In 1994, Matsui designed a bill to reform welfare by easing the transition of recipients to work through additional job training and education. At its core was a goal to encourage parents to achieve financial self-sufficiency without sacrificing the safety net for those it was most intended to help: our nation's disadvantaged children. In 1997, he worked with a bipartisan team of congressional leaders to introduce a bill to provide health care coverage to uninsured children, the CHILD ACT. This bill became the basis of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) a groundbreaking effort that has made significant progress in providing low-income children with health insurance. Matsui continues to support investment in America's future by ensuring the health, education, and opportunity of new generations.

Representative Matsui has used his position on the Ways & Means Committee, which is charged with writing the nation's tax policy, to advance his goal of a balanced and fair revenue code that employs innovative incentives to achieve meaningful and measurable policy objectives. He helped create the Research and Development Tax Credit in 1981 to fuel innovation in the American economy and has been a leader in ensuring its extension while calling for Congress to make the credit permanent. A strong proponent of federal fiscal responsibility, Matsui cosponsored and actively worked to enact the Tax Reform Act of 1986 that closed numerous loopholes and helped bring balance back to the tax system. These reforms removed about 6 million working poor persons from the federal tax rolls and stiffened the minimum tax for corporations and individuals who paid less than their share. In the same spirit of tax equity, Matsui was instrumental in the 1993 expansion of the Earned-Income Tax Credit for working poor families with children. He has sought IRS reform to ensure fairness by protecting tax compliance while respecting taxpayer rights. Throughout his work, Matsui has earned a reputation for innovation and attention to detail on highly specialized tax provisions.

Despite his prominence in national policy-making, Sacramento-area issues have retained their pre-eminence in Representative Matsui's priorities. No goal has been more important to Matsui than bringing adequate flood protection to his hometown. The profound public safety and economic implications of the flood risk to the region make this an urgent and essential policy need. Hit by massive floods in 1986 and 1997, Sacramento's existing 85-year flood protection is less than half the 200-year level most experts agree the area needs. Matsui is committed to seeing through federal authorization and funding of public works projects to bring Sacramento's flood protection to a sufficient level. As the city has grown tremendously during Matsui's time in office, he has also devoted a great deal of attention to ensuring

federal participation in Sacramento's infrastructure projects, including his securing of funds for expansion of the city's light rail public transit. Among the most notable wins in recent years was Matsui's successful effort for a new \$142 million federal courthouse—and the 1,200 new jobs it created—to anchor downtown redevelopment. In 2001, Matsui sought and received a \$3.5 million appropriation for an I-5 decking project that will help reconnect the revitalized downtown core with the waterfront.

Representative Matsui's legislative achievements have been recognized by a broad range of local and national organizations. In 2001, the Capitol Unity Council honored Matsui with the Joe Serna, Jr. Unity Award. The Child Welfare League of America has twice named him Congressional Advocate of the Year, in 1992 and 1994. Also in 1992, Matsui was recognized by the American Public Transit Association for his success in promoting mass transit. The Small Business Council presented him with its Congressional Award in 1988 and the Small Business Export Association gave him its Ronald H. Brown Export Enhancement award in 1998. The Anti-Defamation League has honored him with its Lifetime Achievement Award.

Representative Matsui has a reputation as one of the best vote-counters in the House, and is a Democratic whip-at-large. He is also a regent of the Smithsonian Institution, a position he has held since 1999.

A third-generation Japanese American, Matsui was six months old when he and his family were taken from Sacramento and interned by the U.S. government at the Tule Lake camp in 1942, after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor. In 1988, Representative Matsui helped shepherd the Japanese-American Redress Act through Congress, in which the government formally apologized for the World War II internment program and offered token compensation to victims. He was also instrumental in the designation of Manzanar, a wartime relocation center 200 miles northeast of Los Angeles, as a national historic site and in obtaining land on the National Mall in Washington, DC, for the memorial to Japanese American patriotism in World War II.

Representative Matsui is a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley and Hastings College of Law. He was inspired to the legal field by reading the autobiography of famed trial lawyer Clarence Darrow and to public service by President John F. Kennedy's speech challenging Americans to ask what they could do for their country. He founded his own Sacramento law practice in 1967 and was elected to the Sacramento City Council in 1971. He won reelection in 1975 and became vice mayor of the city in 1977. He is married to the former Doris Okada, who is Senior Advisor and Director of Government Relations at the firm of Collier Shannon Scott, PLLC. Until December of 1998, Mrs. Matsui worked as Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy Director of Public Liaison for President Clinton. Representative and Mrs. Matsui have one grown son, Brian, who received his undergraduate and law degrees from Stanford University.

Rev 01.08.03